

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

2 INTRODUCED BY D. FERN, J. HAMILTON, S. KERNS, T. FRANCE, D. LOGE, R. FITZGERALD, S.

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5 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
6 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF SHARED-USE PATH ROUTES IN MONTANA.7
8 WHEREAS, in 2019, an interim study was conducted to explore existing bicycle and pedestrian paths
9 in the state, including their use, safety, and funding opportunities; and10 WHEREAS, the 2019 study did not evaluate potential new shared-use path routes in the state, policies
11 that may inhibit their development, or the potential national impacts of expanding Montana shared-use paths;
12 and13 WHEREAS, studies show that shared-use paths create positive economic and social impacts for
14 communities; and15 WHEREAS, shared-use path infrastructure creates connectivity of communities, promotes bicycle
16 tourism, and provides safe and equitable access to natural, recreational, and urban areas; and17 WHEREAS, shared-use paths promote physical activity for people of all ages and abilities, reducing
18 medical costs and helping to prevent or decrease chronic illness; and19 WHEREAS, active transportation through shared-use paths reduces vehicle trips, traffic congestion,
20 and greenhouse gas emissions, ultimately promoting a healthier environment; and21 WHEREAS, a number of western states are investing heavily in constructing shared-use path
22 infrastructure; and23 WHEREAS, the League of American Bicyclists 2022 survey of bike-friendly states ranks Montana 42nd
24 in the nation on metrics that include investment in infrastructure, bike-friendly policies, and tourism promotion,
25 while Oregon ranks second, Washington state ranks third, Colorado ranks sixth, and Utah ranks 10th; and26 WHEREAS, federal funding for the construction of shared-use paths and other alternative
27 transportation infrastructure has become widely available through congressional action on infrastructure and
28 transportation legislation, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act.

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2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
3 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

4 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
5 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to do the following:

6 (1) evaluate the potential economic and social impact, cost, and feasibility of establishing new
7 shared-use path routes in the state;

8 (2) review and assess the connectivity of existing and potential shared-use paths in the state,
9 including those needed to develop a route across the state as part of the Great American Rail Trail;

10 (3) identify funding options for developing and maintaining shared-use paths, including state and
11 federal funding sources, and compare Montana funding strategies to other states, regions, or localities;

12 (4) review policies that govern and inhibit shared-use path development and maintenance;

13 (5) engage the public and consult relevant stakeholders regarding shared-use path needs; and

14 (6) identify areas in which state agencies could improve and support shared-use path
15 development.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the locations for potential shared-use paths evaluated in the study
17 must include but may not be limited to the following:

18 (1) parallel to I-90 from the Idaho border to Butte;

19 (2) from Belgrade to Three Forks;

20 (3) along U.S. Highway 89 from Livingston to Gardiner;

21 (4) Badlands-to-Badlands Trail; and

22 (5) other potential routes that promote high community connectivity in rural and urban areas.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
24 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
26 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
28 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

